



Rt Hon David Laws MP
Minister of State for Schools

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Ms Shirley Watson
Dixons City Academy
Ripley Street
Bradford
BD5 7RR

14th November 2014

Dear Ms. Watson,

Early entry/English discounting in performance tables

I am writing to make sure you are aware that the new performance tables' rules, as applied to English GCSEs, may have affected your school's headline results for 2014.

In autumn 2013 the Department for Education announced that, with effect from 29 September 2013, only a student's first entry to a GCSE examination will count in their school's performance tables⁵. The Department also confirmed in autumn 2013 that results for English measures in performance tables would continue to be subject to 'exception' discounting.

Your school is one of a small number that entered pupils for English Literature but not Language in May 2014 and combined English in June 2014. This entry pattern has impacted on the calculation of the English component of your school's performance measures, such as the 5 A* to C and the progress measure. This is because early entry rules mean that, by taking English literature first, the pathway must be completed with an English Language qualification and the subsequent entry in combined English has been discounted. The pathway rules were put in place 2012 to recognise that the combined qualification is designed for students not studying English Literature separately and students capable of studying English literature would also be capable of studying English Language. You should be aware that these rules will continue to apply in future performance table measures when considering the timing of future exam entries.

Students are not affected and have already received their grades for both Combined English and English Literature GCSE. I appreciate, however, that the impact on your performance measures may have been unexpected and you will have concerns about this. While I sympathise with the school for the consequences of an action that you may have believed was in the best interests of individual pupils, I am sure you will understand that these rules should be applied consistently and we should not make retrospective

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/changes-to-early-entry-at-gcse#history> (published 30 September 2013 and updated on 4 October 2013 and 18 November 2013)


changes that could introduce new unfairness in other ways.

Schools and Ofsted will continue to be able to access data via RAISEonline on all results. As usual, Ofsted will look at the full range of data available. In addition to this, the Department will also be making additional data available to you in January to help explain the effects of the early entry rules.

You may wish to use the information in this letter in combination with your own data to explain the extent of the impact of the rules on your school's performance measures. You may also wish to ensure this letter is shared with your chair of governors.

I will copy this letter to Ofsted and your sponsor.

ever,



A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'D' followed by a flourish, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

David Laws MP